



The Lucky Devil



👁 313 ✓ 20 ★ 25

Chapter 1 by NM

Moss stood under a blinking neon sign, a black cigarette smoldering between her forefinger and the middle, casting off lazy streams of smoke; she was of average height and had the build of someone who may have worked out, but definitely danced. Black hair cascaded down to the middle of her back, it had a pleasing sort of bedhead quality to it.

A pair of unforgettable violet orbs eyed the attractive packaging of her favorite brand of cigarettes; aptly named the Black Devils. They went for about 13 to 15 US for a single box, but Moss didn't care, all that mattered was that they were still available for purchase.

She wrapped her lips around the filter, breathing in deeply for a few seconds, then released the pressure; white smoke cascaded out of her mouth, curling into thin lines of gray and pink beneath a stuttering neon sign. Moss held the burning stick away from her face to look out at the half empty parking lot; the usuals were here of course, but she had some new customers today.

The raven haired woman was the owner of The Lucky Devil Bar, working as a bartender when drinks weren't coming out as fast as it could, a bouncer when someone was getting a little too

fresh and a consultant for those under the radar.

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Moss sat with a cold glass, every now and again she would pause to stare at the door, could continue on drinking. A polished crystal cigarette holder sat at the center of the immovable table, harboring

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a burning black stick on its rounded edge; next to it was a table lighter, sturdy and hard, ready to spark to life with a single touch.

Big band music thrummed along the linoleum floor and plaster baseboards, lulling the drunk into dancing and thinking they needed more to drink. Just like magic, she liked to say.

“Excuse me? Are you... Ms. Moss?” A young female voice cut through the noise of her bar. “I was told that you can help me...” Her face was that of an angel, innocence was what came to mind when Moss had a good look at her.

Moss lifted a hand to silence the young women to take a drink, then motioned for her to take a seat. "Welcome to my office." A half smile darted over her features, just to go back to its normally amused stare. The woman with the shifting violet eyes sat back in such a way, half her face was obscured by shadows; the only thing bright being the intensity of her gaze.

“What can I do for *you*?”

Chapter 2 by Stan Johnson



Jennifer Parker couldn't believe she was here. Her mom and dad would *kill* her if they ever learned she'd gone to a place like this. Even now she was fighting hard not to cough. The darkness around her seemed... alive... somehow, but she knew that this *was* the kind of place where she was likely to find what she wanted. What she *needed*.

“Um,” she began, and Ms. Moss cocked an eyebrow. Jennifer squirmed without meaning too; the woman was beautiful and self-possessed, but... harsh. Like a piece of obsidian that you couldn’t take your eyes off, even knowing that it could slice you open if you got too close. “I—” She felt her resolve fading. Her head pounded with the beat, the stale smoke, and the dizzying flicker of the lights. She felt cold, even though she’d broken a sweat just crossing the bar to get here.

“C’mon now, honey. People don’t come here just for my company. They come here because they’ve got problems they can’t fix the usual way.”

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else would save Kyle. She swallowed hard and opened her mouth, struggling to get the words out of her dry throat. “I need a miracle.”

Ms. Moss raised both eyebrows at that, then lowered them. She took another drag off her cigarette, and set it on the ashtray, then stood to leave. “Sorry, kid. We don’t do miracles here. You’ll need to see a priest for that.”

Jennifer felt the hope begin to drain from her, but knew she couldn’t leave without what she’d come for. Surprising herself, she surged to her feet and planted her hands on the desk. “Look, I’m sorry, but I *need* this. I don’t care what you call it, but I was told you... can do things.”

The dark-haired bartender eyed her guest, a spark of interest and—was it something predatory—in her eyes. Jennifer guessed the lady wore colored contacts. Ms. Moss sat, and Jennifer did as well, feeling ashamed of her outburst. “I didn’t catch your name,” she said.

“Jennifer. Jennifer Parker.”

“Well, Jenny,” Ms. Moss said, “you see, the folks that come here aren’t your typical religious folks. This isn’t your parents’ church.”

“I just need help,” Jennifer half whispered, looking at the floor, and regretting her decision to come here. “My best friend is...”

Ms. Moss stood up again. She surprised Jennifer by coming around the desk, kneeling beside her, and gently placing an arm around her shoulder. “Jenny, hon, it’s alright. If you’re here, then you probably know why you were sent. So yeah. I can help you with your friend. I bet he’s quite the stud, isn’t he? Makes your heart flutter?”

Jennifer’s head whipped up. “I never said my friend was a guy.”

Ms. Moss smiled thinly. “I’ve seen enough cases like yours, baby girl. You didn’t have to say it. Now. Tell me what I can do for you.”

The younger girl sniffled against Jennifer’s neck, and the woman, “A succubus has a hold of my best friend, Kyle. No one believes me, and I have no way of fighting demons. I need something to help him.”

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The owner of The Lucky Devil gave a devilish grin of her own. "Well, now," she said, rounding her desk and sitting again. She picked up her cigarette and nestled it between her lips. Jennifer wondered how *anyone* could enjoy such a... such a dirty habit. "I just so happen to know a little about the others."

Jennifer wrinkled her nose. "The 'others'?"

Ms. Moss smiled. "Demons. Ghosts. Ghouls. Vampires. Mythical creatures. Non-humans. Whatever. Easier to just call them 'others.'"

The high school student squirmed in her chair. "Oh."

"My next question," the older woman said, "is, what are you willing to pay to help save your friend? And believe me—I can help you with this."

Jennifer swallowed again, her heart tightening in her chest. The room seemed to shrink around her, and she felt as if someone else were answering for her. "For Kyle? Anything."

Chapter 3 by NM



"So, she doesn't know?"

"No." Moss said simply, wondering if there had been a point to what her long time friend was asking; of course she had not said anything about her plan. "Jennifer has nothing to give me, at least, not on her own. I'm simply... Helping her with a payment plan." She paused to take a sip of her drink. "Before now, I'm sure she didn't think a succubus, let alone I, even existed."

"Mossy... Without her knowing..." Niul leaned to rest both his arms on the table as he spoke; most of his features had been obscured by the dark of the booth, but his forearms gave enough away. Even fully clothed, his lean, corded muscles could not be constrained by the thin fabric of his white button up. "Ruthless." He said awfully amused.

"I Regret Nothing." A grin split the woman's face in two

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"Have you thought about the chances of her being a demon?"

"I think that she will be fine. I'm not a lack of faith."

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"I'm hearing a but somewhere in here."

"I'm hearing our angel has no

"Its getting the blood, I mean do you have any to spare?... I didn't think so."

Niul chuckled darkly as he leaned further into the light. "I'm sure we could arrange something." Bright gray eyes glinted sharply. "Doesn't she go to school with said succubus?" Moss nodded. "There you go."

"Brilliant." Excited, Moss slammed her glass against the sturdy table, cracking the cup on one side. "I'll make that call."

Like a specter, Moss floated away from the table, her phone on her ear. "Hey darling, I got a favor to ask."

Chapter 4 by Good Vibes



"Can you kill me?"

She laughed sadistically as she put a knife to her neck.

Niul screamed, and Moss turned around. There he lay, dead as a nail. /What happened/? Moss wondered.

Chapter 5 by Stan Johnson



The following Tuesday and Wednesday would prove to be a fiery tattoo on her mind that Jennifer wished she'd never had. The smell of formaldehyde was especially strong in 4th period biology, that morning. The fluorescent lights raked at her vision and dozens of whispers assaulted her mind. She felt twenty pair of eyes not looking at her, but *through* her. Jennifer stood in front of the microscope on the lab counter, holding a small, one-use finger prick to draw blood with. Beside her was Lilly Adamson, the...girl... whose gaze caged Kyle Summers. Mr. Connors, her biology teacher, had broken the class into pairs and instructed them to place a drop or two of their own blood on a slide for examination under the microscope.

I really hope Ms. Moss was right about this, she thought, her heart pulsing in her throat. *But*

what if I can't do this? Lilly had a body from a magazine, a face too good to be true, and a smile that seemed to melt men and women alike. She had a 2015 Ford Ranger in Lilly's late model Ferrari. She brushed her hair and looked in the mirror and hoped she wouldn't break into tears before it

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Just do it, Jennifer, Ms. Moss' voice said in her mind. The echoing memory reverberated in her skull; the woman had seemed so certain that a mere 16 year old could somehow outsmart whatever Lilly *actually* was.

I've been around the block a few times, honey. Humans have weaknesses. Others do too. You just need to know where to press, and they'll pop. With succubi? It's pride and vanity. And she'd instructed Jennifer from there.

"I," Jennifer started, struggling to remember Ms. Moss' lesson as she hazarded a glance at Lilly. The tall blond's attention was firmly fixed on Kyle who, against Mr. Connors' instructions, had planted himself and his eager lab partner at the microscope next to Jennifer and Lilly. She felt herself shrink at the way her friend's eyes caressed the other girl's face; she wished *anyone* would look at her that way. Okay, anyone *not* related by blood, and preferably under age 20.

She's lying to you, Kyle, she thought. *If you could only see what she really looks like, you'd never look at her again.* Steeling herself, she tapped Lilly firmly on the shoulder. The other girl didn't respond. Jennifer repeated it twice, and finally the demon sighed audibly—earning a chuckle from Kyle—then painstakingly turned to look at Jennifer as if she weren't *quite* a fully rotted piece of meat. And yet, that smile flashed into place, and Jennifer felt her resolve vanish like magic.

"Well?" Lilly said, still smiling ear to ear.

"I—I," Jennifer started. Lamely, she held up the finger prick.

"Oh," her companion said, her smile morphing into a smirk. "Can't figure it out? Well, let's have one of these big, strong, *handsome* studs help us?" Jennifer saw Kyle and his lab partner light up. Lilly put on a pout, winked at Jennifer, and turned around.

"Oh, Kyle?" The sickly-sweet voice could have punched holes in Jennifer's eardrums. "Could you *please* help me with this?" Kyle and his friend practically fell all over themselves. Jennifer

could tell what she wanted at the first exchange with Kyle and Lilly's hand and knew that how to work the device.

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She noticed Kyle leaning toward Lilly's hand. Lilly squeezed her bleeding finger, causing it to bleed *far* more than it should have from such a tiny hole. With that, she shot a predatory wink back at Jennifer.

Kyle's lips lingered *way* too long on Lilly's finger. When he didn't come up for air after several seconds, Jennifer snapped her fingers in front of his face. He jerked upright, eyes glassy for a moment. "Earth to Kyle," she said. "I'd love your help with this experiment." She hated the jealousy she heard in her voice, and, rather than look at Lilly, took a finger prick and drew her own blood. Kyle didn't even seem to notice.

"Mine first," Lilly said. "Please?" Without waiting for a response, the succubus dabbed her finger on a slide, smearing a writhing streak of black blood on it. Jennifer gasped, but recovered quickly when Kyle and Lilly regarded her strangely.

"I—I'm not a huge fan of blood," she said. "That's all." Jennifer shrugged, and then took turns with Kyle peering into the microscope. Kyle's lab partner tried to elbow his way in, but Kyle, in an uncharacteristic display of aggressiveness, shoved him away repeatedly, leaving the boy sulking.

While Kyle and Lilly pretended to make notes about the blood, Jennifer stared at it, sitting so... readily available... on the slide. It was exactly what Ms. Moss had wanted. *I can work with almost nothing*, the chilling woman had said through a smile. *The Lucky Devil brews more than just good drinks, if you take my meaning.*

Mr. Connors cleared his throat. "Let's wrap things up, folks. We're running a little behind schedule." He cast a meaningful glance at Kyle and Lilly. Kyle didn't seem to even notice, and Lilly responded with a smile that seemed to affect the biology teacher the same way it hit his students.

Jennifer stepped quickly to the microscope. "I'll clean up. Lilly. Don't worry about it. You already did the rest of the work. I should help. You're too pretty to be doing dumb things like clean up." She swallowed the bile that rose with the words. Gratefully, Lilly took the bait, and flounced

back to her desk with Kyle in tow. Jennifer fought back the mist in her eyes, and, ensuring Lilly wasn't watching, scooped the slide. Lilly, who'd been leaning over the desk, she slipped out an old, empty compact. With a quick flick of her wrist, she flipped the compact, then tucked it into her purse.

Beyond belief, she had acquired the blood of a succubus.

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Sitting in Ms. Moss' office was every bit as uncomfortable the second time as it had been the first. Jennifer had arrived at that...place... well after the time she should have been in bed and was surprised when, despite clear signs she was underage, the burly who let her into the bar immediately escorted her across the smoky room and back to Moss' dark little den. She squirmed in the chair—which was far more comfortable than it should have been—while Moss stood behind a minibar across the room, shaking a tumbler. Jennifer hadn't asked about what all had gone into it, but the bartender had seemed happy to make the concoction.

"Now," Ms. Moss said, "this isn't much, but it's all you'll need. A girl like you really doesn't need to know the details of what went into making this, but let's just say you'll be fighting fire with fire."

Something sank in Jennifer's gut. "Wh-what's that supposed to mean?"

The older woman simply smiled and handed over the drink. "Honey, you'll know *exactly* what to do by morning. Oh—I'll give you a little secret: bring the succubus my way, and I'll discount your price."

Jennifer swallowed hard. "I still don't even know what—"

"Don't worry about it. Just bring her by, and you won't owe me a thing. Now... bottom's up." She smiled again, and Jennifer knew she had no choice. Was she really willing to do *anything* to save Kyle? His face flashed in her mind, including the vacant look after he'd kissed Lilly's finger better. Yes. She needed to do this. Kyle was a *good* guy; better than she deserved, but still, if she was the only one...

And so she drank.

That night was her Gethsemane. How her screaming hadn't woken her parents and siblings was a total mystery. Not five minutes after she'd laid down to sleep, the effect of the drink erupted in

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That night, she finally knew *exactly* what ever sermon about the destinies of the damned meant.

Wednesday morning, Jennifer awoke in Heaven. Her throat, once laced with the broken glass of her cries, felt like singing for joy. The world glowed around her, and all her senses reveled in a feeling of *life* like she'd never known. She rose from her bathtub, where she'd retreated, fully clothed, to a freezing shower somewhere around midnight, begging for whatever mercy she could find. Now, the nightmare was over, and all was well.

As she changed from her wet clothing into a dry outfit (and why were all her clothes so plain, tack, and "1950's homemaker"?) she noticed that her shirt was much tighter, and that her balance was off from where it was used to be, and her hips swayed with practiced ease. A strange, but comfortable warmth circulated through her. When she strutted to the mirror to check her makeup, the girl looking back was not Jennifer Parker, every day Christian girl, daughter of two loving parents and sister to three, rambunctious little brothers. She was not the girl who everyone merely "liked."

No, the girl—no, the *woman*—smirking back was a **goddess**. And this little goddess knew exactly how to wrench the wretched claws of Lilly Adamson, demonic impostor, away from *Jennifer's* man.

Chapter 6 by Allykat8888



Sashaying down the halls, not a head didn't turn towards her. Boys and girls swooned alike, when she gave a wink of her amber eyes. A headband pushed back her hair from daring to cover up her gorgeous facial features. She found her cheekbones sat higher, and her nose was curving more. she gave a whip of her golden mane, flicking a poor boy in the face! She glanced over to see Lilly whispering in Kyle's ear, but he wasn't listening now was he?

"Hey Kyle!" Her voice sang "Lilly....Nice to see you too...." Her tone flattened. "What are you two doing here?"

"N-nothing!" Kyle said, mesmerized by the goddess emanating off her. "W-walk me to class?"

"Sure!" She exclaimed, forking her fork into the

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Walking down the halls with Kyle again was such a pleasant feeling, but nothing compared to sensing the anger exploding inside of Lilly. But her plan had only just begun. She had MUCH more planned for that little subbucus

Chapter 7 by Bree



Moss smiled as she opened her eyes slowly as she was brought back to reality. The dark of The Lucky Devil curled around her writhing sensually against her skin. She shifted slowly in her seat picking up her cigarette and placing it against her lips- taking a long drag she tipped her head back and blew the smoke into the air.

Niul strode from the darkness and placed a cocktail in front of Moss "Long day at the office?" a crooked smile played on his lips as he looked at her. Moss slid her hand across to where the drink had been placed only for it to slide from the grasp of her fingers. She chuckled and slowly slid her hand away from the drink bringing it back to the cigarette "You're very inquisitive for a bartender.." Niul leaned closer to Moss "And you're very secretive for a friend.."

Moss grinned devilishly as she blew smoke past her lips "Oh you know I would keep nothing from you." Balancing her cigarette on the crystal ashtray she leaned back in her chair.

Niul slid around the table so he was directly in front of Moss, his thighs placed on either side of her legs. "Mmhm. What about the time with our dear friend Rusty? Or maybe that time with the livid customer? Or-" Niul slowly leaned closer so his lips brushed the shell of Moss's ear "I could go on Mossy.."

Moss smiled and ran her hand up his arm slowly making her way to his chest feeling him shiver under her touch. Grasping his collar she pulled him so their lips almost touched, lowly she asked "The question that begs to be answered is whether or not in that time I would get my drink Ni.."

With a dramatic sigh he sat up and handed her the drink he had concocted, the clear liquid lapped at the sides of the thin stemmed glass and he crossed his arms " You wound me Moss- to think you only need me for alcohol." However his smile after showed he wasn't hurt at all.

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and inky darkness puffing and out of breath " Ms. Moss! Ms. Moss.. I need to know what is happening to me? What is going on??"

Moss waved at the girl to sit down and took a drag on her cigarette the smoke turned purple in the pink neon lighting. Moss pinned the girl with a stare " Jenny. You came to me for help correct?" The girl nodded her blonde hair bouncing "And I did help you Jenny. I gave you the exact tools you needed. I figured I could take care of your problem with ease.. the girl Lilly, except how would that help you in the long run?"

Jennifer opened her mouth and Moss raised her eyebrow "The answer is it wouldn't. You need to be able to look out for yourself as well as be able to ask for help. And now you can." Niul was positioned behind Moss's chair and he rested his hand on the back of it watching the girl- almost as if he was Moss's 'guardian angel'.

Jennifer swallowed " What.. What am I?" Moss tapped her cigarette on the ashtray dislodging the burn-off and looked up from under her dark locks. Placing her hand on top of the girls in a comforting gesture she smiled slightly

"Jenny. You're just like me."

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